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Opening court lets people witness value of adoptions

The St. Clair County Family Court each year handles hundreds of cases involving children who are abused or neglected by their parents or others. The Michigan Department of Human Services and the court works with the parents in an effort to reunite children with their birth parents.

When, however, it becomes apparent that doing so is not in the best interest of the child after a trial on the issue, many times the birth parent's rights to parent their child are terminated. The child is then made a ward of the state.

When the birth parents lose their parental rights to children, many of these foster parents, relatives and others, step forward to provide a permanent caring and loving home for these children through adoption. Last year there were 108 children adopted in St. Clair County Family Court.

Adoption cases are confidential proceedings and are usually open only to the adopting family and those persons invited by the family to be present.

On Nov. 21, however, in recognition of National Adoption Day, St. Clair County Family Court will be participating in a celebration of this important event in the lives of these children by opening the proceedings on this day to the public.

Each of the families participating that day has agreed to waive the confidentiality of the proceedings so that the public can share in this important and happy event. It also serves as an opportunity to those who are contemplating adoption or becoming foster parents to see first hand the tremendous impact they can have on the lives of children who simply want to be loved and cared for.

If you are considering adoption or becoming a foster parent, please take the initiative to call the Michigan Department of Human Services at (810) 966-2159, visit www.michigan.gov/dhs or visit the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange Web site at www.mare.org

ELWOOD L. BROWN

Chief Probate Judge

St. Clair County Probate Court

JAMES NUNOLD

Director

St. Clair County Department of Human Services

Nov. 16
